

# Thomas Jefferson – Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Flora at Monticello

**Title:** Thomas Jefferson- Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Flora at Monticello

**Website Intro:**

Thomas Jefferson spent countless hours studying the flora and fauna of the world around him. People often sent him seeds, and he would frequently gather seeds on his own to experiment with at Monticello. This elementary school lesson plan explores the idea of Jefferson's flora research in the form of a field journal. Students will examine the flora that is found all around the grounds of Monticello.

**Materials:**

- PowerPoint
- Encyclopedia Articles
- Field Journal Template
- Flower Stroll Document
- Dice
- Coloring Utensils

**Grade level:** Upper Elementary 3-5

**Interdisciplinary Connections:** This lesson integrates history, reading, science, and writing skills in order to investigate and examine the different flora and fauna found around Monticello.

**Duration:** 0-30 minutes

**Objectives:**

- Students will describe flowers in detail using vivid adjectives.
- Students will draw pictures of their flowers in detail.
- Students will be able to use research resources and other research tools to make detailed summary notes.
- Students will evaluate research resources and their notes to correctly identify flowers.
- Students will know and defend their identifications by comparing their notes to research resources.

**Steps:**

Students will be divided into various groups throughout the room. Students will go to a station with their

Field Guide Template. Since varieties of flowers are found in flower gardens, the students will roll the die to determine which flower they will 'see' first.

1. Students will take the number on the die and correspond it to the number on the flower they see on their Flower Garden Stroll Document.
2. Students will compare the flowers on the Garden Stroll Document to the flowers on the PowerPoint to determine which flower they have. The students will then write down the common name of their flower, as well as the scientific name of their flower.
3. The students will research their flower with the research resource on their tables. The students will write down notes and illustrate their flower on the Field Guide Page Template. The students will complete the rest of the template by filling in the remaining boxes.
4. The students will hand in their completed template and the teacher will evaluate their template using a checklist and/or a rubric.

### **Assessment:**

Students will complete their field journal making sure that they have attended every station. Each area of the template must be filled out. Students should be able to identify their flowers and complete their template with accurate and detailed descriptions.

**Assessment Criteria:** Checklist- Teacher will complete a checklist to make sure that all areas of the template are filled out. The teacher could also use a rubric to evaluate their field journal.

### **Accommodations:**

For gifted and talented students, the teacher could have the students delve into more areas of exploration, such as plants, trees, birds, fruits, vegetables, insects, animals, and crops. They could also have the students pick one of the flowers on their pages in their field journal and write a research paper.

Some students may need to have their number of flowers reduced and have them research only the key details. Some students may need additional assistance with vocabulary and/or multiple pictures.

Some students may not be able to draw the image of the flowers, so the teacher can print off photographs and have them glued into their field journal.

**Extensions:** Digital Field Trips partnering with Monticello can be done before or after this activity. The teacher can expand this lesson to include both the flora and fauna of Monticello by having students complete pages in their field journals for plants, trees, birds, fruits, vegetables, insects, animals, and crops. They can even expand it to include the trades and industries, as well as domestic skills that were incorporated on the Monticello Plantation by including studies of the trades on Mulberry Row.

### **Quotes**

*No occupation is so delightful to me as the culture of the earth, and no culture comparable to that of the garden.* Thomas Jefferson

*... the failure of one thing repaired by the success of another; and instead of one harvest, a continued one throughout the year.* Thomas Jefferson

*But though an old man, I am but a young gardener.* Thomas Jefferson

*Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bands.* Thomas Jefferson



Th. Jefferson  
MONTICELLO